



April 1, 2005

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Clinton:

As the manager of the Kraft Foods/Philadelphia Cream Cheese plant in Lowville, which employs 353 New Yorkers, I am writing to urge you to support legislation that will implement the United States and Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR).

Over 99 percent of food and agricultural products exported from the CAFTA-DR countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic) enter the United States duty free, while our own exports to this region often face stiff tariffs. For example, Costa Rica imposes a 66-percent tariff on cream cheese, and El Salvador charges a 40-percent tariff on processed cheese. This trade agreement would help to level the playing field and could benefit consumers throughout the region.

In general, U.S. exports of processed food products already capture roughly one quarter of total food imports into the six countries, and U.S. brands – including well-known Kraft brands produced right here in Lowville – are popular throughout the region. Already, exports of many processed food products are growing faster than other agricultural products. The elimination of tariffs will make our products far more competitive in the region and could, in turn, benefit the 353 employees in our plant.

In addition, this agreement would increase U.S. sugar imports from the six countries. U.S. Government policies restrict imports of sugar, artificially inflating U.S. sugar prices. This boosts production costs for Kraft, one of the country's largest buyers of sugar, and drives consumer prices higher than they would be without such trade barriers.

I support CAFTA-DR, and I hope that you will as well. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Geary", written over a horizontal line.

Tim Geary
Plant Manager

cc: Honorable Tim Bishop
Honorable Steve J. Israel

Honorable Carolyn McCarthy
Honorable Gary L. Ackerman
Honorable Gregory W. Meeks
Honorable Joseph Crowley
Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Honorable Anthony D. Weiner
Honorable Edolphus Towns
Honorable Major R. Owens
Honorable Nydia M. Velázquez
Honorable Vito Fossella
Honorable Carolyn Maloney
Honorable Charles B. Rangel
Honorable José E. Serrano
Honorable Eliot Engel
Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Honorable Sue W. Kelly
Honorable John E. Sweeney
Honorable Michael R. McNulty
Honorable Maurice Hinchey
Honorable John McHugh
Honorable Sherwood L. Boehlert
Honorable James T. Walsh
Honorable Thomas Reynolds
Honorable Brian M. Higgins
Honorable Louise McIntosh Slaughter
Honorable Randy Kuhl